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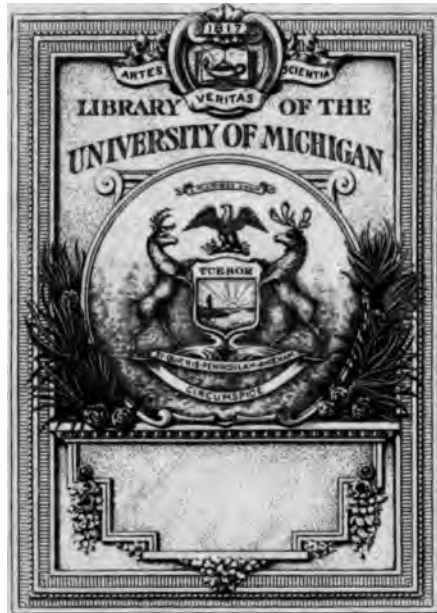
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v. 28

Sire Degarre.

Degare (Romance.)

Sire Degarre

A

Metrical Romance

Of the end of

The Thirteenth Century.



Edinburgh :

M.DCCC.XLIX.



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PREFACE.

THE Historian of English Poetry has included SIRE DEGARRÉ among the popular Metrical Romances which appeared in England about the end of the Thirteenth Century; and there seems to be no just ground for calling this opinion in question. The well-known AUCHINLECK MANUSCRIPT, preserved in the Advocates Library, is usually ascribed to the middle of the Fourteenth Century, and it furnishes the earliest and most perfect copy of this Romance, which has been discovered. As hitherto unpublished, it was considered that an accurate edition of the text from that Manuscript, with the defects and the various readings supplied from the more recent copies, might form an acceptable contribution to the Members of the ABBOTSFORD CLUB.

Of the later copies of this Romance, the one most entitled to notice is preserved in a Manuscript volume of the Fifteenth Century, among Bishop More's MSS. in the University Library, Cambridge. Although it contains only the first 602 lines, it serves to supply some of the deficiencies in the Auchinleck Manuscript. The late learned Archdeacon Todd, in his "Illus-

trations of Gower and Chaucer,"¹ has described a fragment on two leaves, containing 160 lines of this Romance, as forming part of a Manuscript supposed to be of the Fourteenth Century, now the property of the Earl of Ellesmere; but the volume, at present, is unfortunately not accessible. A fourth copy, but probably of very little importance, is contained in Bishop Percy's Manuscript.²

The Romance of SYR DEGORÉ also exists in a printed form; and three editions, printed in black letter, serve to attest its popularity during the Sixteenth Century, in England. These editions, which are probably of equal rarity, are much inferior in intrinsic value to the older Manuscripts. The earliest is one without date, printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 4to. 18 leaves, described in Dibdin's *Typographical Antiquities*,³ and supposed to be unique. A mutilated transcript, apparently from this edition, made in the year 1564, is in the Douce collection in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Among Selden's books, in that Library, there is a copy of the edition printed at London by John King, in the year 1560, 4to. 16 leaves.⁴ The similar edition without date, but probably about 1545, "imprynted by Wyllyam Copland," 4to. 16 leaves, is preserved in the Garrick collection, in the British Museum.⁵ No second copy of either of these editions has occurred for sale. That of Copland's was reprinted by E. V. Utterson, Esq. in his valuable and interesting collection entitled "*Select Pieces of Early Popular Poetry, reprinted from the Black letter.*" London, 1817, 2 vols. 8vo.

¹ It should evidently be regarded in no other light than as an inaccurate transcript from one of the black letter editions, with the name corrupted to "Sir Degree."—(*Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, edit. 1793, vol. iii. p. xli.)

² Page 167. Lond. 1810, 8vo. and 4to.

³ Vol. ii. p. 376.

⁴ Dibdin's *Typographical Antiquities*, vol. iv. p. 338.

⁵ *Ib.* vol. iii. p. 164.

Mr George Ellis, in his "Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances," has given an elaborate analysis, and selected passages of Sir Degoré. The more concise outline of the story, by Warton, may here be given, as a suitable introduction to the Romance itself.

"SYR DEGORE is a Romance perhaps belonging to the same period, (with the *Romances of Priz*, enumerated by Chaucer.) After his education under a hermit, Sir Degore's first adventure is against a dragon. This horrible monster is marked with the hand of a master :—

"Degore went furth his waye,
Through a forest half a daye :
He herd no man, nor sawe none,
Tyll yt past the hygh none,
Then herd he grete strokes falle,
That yt made grete noyse with alle,
Full sone he thoght that to se,
To wete what the strokes myght be :
There was an erle, both stout and gaye,
He was come ther that same daye,
For to hunt for a dere or a do,
But hys houndes were gone him fro.
Then was ther a dragon grete and grymme,
Full of fyre and also venymme,
Wyth a wyde throte and tuskes grete,
Uppon that knygte fast gan he bete.
And as a lyon then was hys feete,
Hys tayle was long, and full unmeete :
Betwene hys head and hys tayle
Was xxii fote withouten fayle ;
Hys body was lyke a wyne tonne,
He shone ful bryght agaynst the sunne :

Hys eyen were bright as any glasse,
 His scales were hard as any brasse ;
 And therto he was necked lyke a horse,
 He bare hys hed up wyth grete force ;
 The breth of hys mouth that did out blow
 As yt had been a fyre on lowe.
 He was to loke on, as I you telle,
 As yt had bene a fiende of helle.
 Many a man he had shent,
 And many a horse he had rente.¹

“ As the Minstrel profession became a science, and the audience grew more civilised, refinements began to be studied, and the romantic poet sought to gain new attention, and to recommend his story by giving it the advantage of a plan. Most of the old Metrical Romances are, from their nature, supposed to be incoherent rhapsodies. Yet many of them have a regular integrity, in which every part contributes to produce an intended end. Through various obstacles and difficulties one point is kept in view, till the final and general catastrophe is brought about by a pleasing and unexpected surprise. As a specimen of the rest, and as it lies in a narrow compass, I will develop the plan of the fable now before us, which preserves at least a coincidence of events, and an uniformity of design.

“ A King’s daughter of England, extremely beautiful, is solicited in marriage by numerous potentates of various kingdoms. The King her father vows, that of all these suitors, that champion alone shall win his daughter who can unhorse him at a tournament. This they all attempt, but in vain.

¹ This extract, it will be observed, varies considerably from the printed text, lines 333 to 354.

The King every year assisted at an anniversary mass for the soul of his deceased queen, who was interred in an abbey at some distance from his castle. In the journey thither, the Princess strays from her damsels in a solitary forest : she is discovered by a Knight in rich armour, who by many solicitations prevails over her chastity, and, at parting, gives her a sword without a point, which he charges her to keep safe ; together with a pair of gloves, which will fit no hands but her own.¹ At length she finds the road to her father's castle, where, after some time, to avoid discovery, she is secretly delivered of a boy. Soon after the delivery, the Princess having carefully placed the child in a cradle, with twenty pounds in gold, ten pounds in silver, the gloves given her by the strange Knight, and a letter, consigns him to one of her maidens, who carries him by night, and leaves him in a wood near a hermitage, which she discerned by the light of the moon. The Hermit in the morning discovers the child ; reads the letter, by which it appears that the gloves will fit no lady but the boy's mother, educates him till he is twenty years of age, and at parting gives him the gloves found with him in the cradle, telling him that they will fit no lady but his own mother. The youth, who is called Degoré, sets forward to seek adventures, and saves an Earl from a terrible dragon, which he kills. The Earl invites him to his palace, dubs him a knight, gives him a horse and armour, and offers him half his territory. Sir Degoré refuses to accept this offer, unless the gloves, which he had received from his foster-father the Hermit, will fit any lady of his court. All

¹ “ Gloves were antiently a costly article of dress, and richly decorated. They were sometimes adorned with precious stones. Rot. Pip. an. 53. Henr. iii. [A.D. 1267.] “ Et de i. pectine auri cum lapidibus pretiosis ponderant. xliiis. et iii~~l~~. ob. Et de ii. paribus chirothecarum cum LAPIDIBUS.” This golden comb, set with jewels, realises the wonders of romance.”

the ladies of the Earl's court are called before him, and among the rest the Earl's daughter, but upon trial the gloves will fit none of them. He therefore takes leave of the Earl, proceeds on his adventures, and meets with a large train of knights ; he is informed that they were going to tourney with the King of England, who had promised his daughter to that knight who could conquer him in single combat. They tell him of the many barons and earls whom the king had foiled in several trials. Sir Degoré, however, enters the lists, overthrows the King, and obtains the Princess. As the Knight is a perfect stranger, she submits to her father's commands with much reluctance. He marries her ; but in the midst of the solemnities which preceded the consummation, recollects the gloves which the Hermit had given him, and proposes to make an experiment with them on the hands of his bride. The Princess, on seeing the gloves, changed colour, claimed them for her own, and drew them on with the greatest ease. She declares to Sir Degoré that she was his mother, and gives him an account of his birth : she told him that the Knight his father gave her a pointless sword, which was to be delivered to no person but the son that should be born of their stolen embraces. Sir Degoré draws the sword, and contemplates its breadth and length with wonder : is suddenly seized with a desire of finding out his father. He sets forward on this search, and on his way enters a castle, where he is entertained at supper by fifteen beautiful damsels. The lady of the castle invites him to her bed, but in vain ; and he is lulled asleep by the sound of a harp. Various artifices are used to divert him from his pursuit, and the lady even engages him to encounter a giant in her cause.¹

¹ " All the Romances have such an obstacle as this. They have all an enchantress, who detains the knight from his quest by objects of pleasure ; and who is nothing more than the Calypso of Homer, the Dido of Virgil, and the Armida of Tasso."

But Sir Degoré rejects all her temptations, and pursues his journey. In a forest he meets a Knight richly accoutred, who demands the reason why Sir Degoré presumed to enter his forest without permission. A combat ensues. In the midst of the contest, the combatants being both unhorsed, the strange Knight observing the sword of his adversary not only to be remarkably long and broad, but without a point, begs a truce for a moment. He fits the sword to a point which he had always kept, and which had formerly broken off in an encounter with a giant; and by this circumstance discovers Sir Degoré to be his son. They both return into England, and Sir Degoré's father is married to the Princess his mother."

Mr Utterson, whose opinion in such matters is of great weight, is inclined to think that the title of the Romance denotes its French origin, "the name being, if correctly spelt, *D'Egare*, or *L'Egare*, a person *almost lost*." In the printed copies the language is much corrupted and modernized, and, as that gentleman observes, the name "is occasionally used as two syllables, so as to rhyme with 'before.'" In regard to the age of its composition, he says—

"Both Warton and Ellis admit its high antiquity, as they concur in assigning its probable date to the beginning of the Fourteenth Century. In fact, the narrative itself affords some internal evidence of the period when it was composed, by speaking (at l. 703,) of the "shone croked as a knighte."¹ The crooked or horned shoe was introduced in the reign of Wm. Rufus, and appears then to have been confined to the gentry. Strutt however supposes that this fashion did not long keep its ground; but, he says, it was afterwards revived, and even carried to a more preposterous extent than before. He is however of opinion that the long piked shoes were not worn later than the beginning or middle of the Fifteenth Century.

¹ In the present edition, (line 790,) it reads, "His schon i-couped as a knight."

“There are two printed copies of this Romance known to be in existence ; one is in the Bodleian Library, 4to. Selden C. 39. The title is over a wood-cut of a knight on horseback at full gallop ; beneath is the date MDLX. It was printed by John King. The other (from which this reprint is taken) is in the Garrick Collection of old plays, in the British Museum, and was printed by Copland, in 4to. without date. In the title-page is a wood-cut, of which the vignette here given is a reduced fac-simile,¹ and which was frequently used by the Coplands : it occurs in the History of Arthur and his Knights, printed by W. Copland in 1557. A wood-cut, so similar to this as scarcely to be distinguished from it, is also to be found in the old French Romance of Theseus de Coulogne, folio, Paris, 1534.”

In comparing the older Manuscript and printed texts, it will be found that, exclusive of the 42 lines of conclusion, where the Auchinleck Manuscript is defective, while the former extends to 1073 lines, the latter contains only 951 lines. The various readings of the Cambridge Manuscript are subjoined from a transcript obligingly communicated to the Editor by J. O. HALLIWELL, Esq. Accurate fac-similes of the title-page, and of the wood-cuts, illustrative of the Romance, which are introduced at the several divisions of Wynkyn de Worde's edition, accompany this Prefatory Notice ; and it is only necessary to remark that the text presents no material variation from that of Copland's edition, as reprinted by Mr Utterson.

August 1848.

¹ A fac-simile of this spirited vignette is given in the title-page of the present volume.

The unique copy of **SYR DEGORE**, imprinted by Wynkyn de Worde, was one of the many volumes of Early English Poetry which the late **MR MILLER** of **CRAIGENTINNY** acquired in 1834, at the dispersion of Mr Heber's Library. The Volume was brought by **MR MILLER** to Scotland last autumn, but his subsequent illness and decease rendered the delay in the publication unavoidable.

The following fac-similes have been executed by Mr Netherclift from the original Romance. They exhibit most faithful copies of the title and woodcuts of Wynkyn de Worde's Edition.

In thus carrying **MR MILLER**'s wishes and intentions into effect, it is hoped this Volume will be regarded as a pleasing memorial of his devoted attachment to our Early Poetical Literature.

March 1849.

Coyr Degore





A yuynges and ye wyll holde you styll
A gentyll tale tell you I wyll
Of knyghtes of this countree
That hath trauayled beyonde the see
To seke auentures bothe nyght & daye
And how they myght they strength allay
As dyde a knyght his name was lye Degore
One of the best that was founde hym before
Somtyme in Englonde there was a kynge
A noble man of maners in all thyng
Stoute in armes and vnder shyld
Full moche doubted in batayll and felde;
There was no man than heramente
That with hym Justed in turlmente
That out of his tryppe myght bypunge his fote
He was so stronge without doubte
The kynge had no chyldern but one
A doughter as whyte as whalles bone
That mayden he loued as his lyfe
Her moder was deed the quene his wyfe
In trauayll of chylde she dyed alas
But whan that mayden of ayege was
Kynkes lones her woed then
Emperours Dukes and other men
To haue that mayden in maryage
For loue of her grette herytage
But than the kynge dyde them answere
That no man sholde wedde her
But yf that he myght with stoute Justynge
The kynge out of his sadyll bypunge
And downe hym lose his tryppes two
If any one assayed and myght nought do

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How syr Degore fought with a dragon in a fo
rest and slewe hym.



**How syr Degore Juffed with the kynge of En
glonde and smote hym downe.**



**How sye Degoze wedded his moder the kynges
doughter of Englonde and howe shewe knewe yf
he was her sone by the glours. ¶**



11/11/11

1

2

3

4

**Choto for Dergore foughte for a lady with a gy-
aunt and felle hym. *~~~~~***



**How Syr Degore fought with his fader & how
his fader knewe hym by the broken swerde.**



Cruelly madame than sayd he
 Full well I wote that it is he
 Now thanked be god than sayd the kynge
 For now we I wote without lesynge
 Who is syr Degoyes fader in dede
 The lady swoned in that stede
 And sone after sek erly
 The knyght wedded that lady
 She and her sone was departed I wyne
 For he and she were to nyg of kynne
 Forth thenne wente syr Degoye
 With the kynge and his meyne
 His fader and his moder dere
 Unto they castell they wente in fere
 Where as dwelled that lady byghe
 That he had wonne in fyght
 And wedded her with grete solempnyte
 Before all the lordes of that countte
 Thus came the knyght out of his care
 God gyue us grace well to fare
 And that we all ypon domes day
 Come to the blyss that lasteth ay.

A B C D

Thus endeth the treatyse of syr Degoye. En-
 prynted at London in flete strete at the sygne of
 the sonne by Wynkyn de Worde. 

Sire Degarre.

Sire Degarre.

[LYSTENYTH LORDINGES, GENT AND FRE',
Y WYLL YOW TELLE OF SIRE DEGARE.]

K NIZT[ES that were some tyme in londe,
Ferli fele wolde fonde
And fechen aventouris, bi nigt and dai,
How zhe migte here strengthe afai ;
So did a Knyzt SIRE DEGAREE,
Ich wille zou telle wat man was he.

In Litel Bretaygne was a King
Of gret poer in alle thing,
Stif in armes vnder fcheld,
And mochel i-douted in the feld ;
Ther was no man verrament
That migt in werre, ne in tornament,
Ne in justes, for no thing,
Him out of his fadel bring,
Ne out of his ftirope bringe his fot,
So ftron[g] he was of bon and blod.

10

This Kyng he hadde none hair
But a maiden child, fre and fair,
Here gentireffe, and here beaute,
Was moche renound in ich countre ;

20

Sire Degarre.

This Maiden he loued als his lif,
 Of hire was ded the Quene his wif,
 In trauailing here life zhe les.
 And tho the maiden of age wes,
 Kynges fones to him speke,
 Emperours, and dukes eke,
 To hauen his doughter in mariage,
 For loue of here heritage :
 Ac the Kyng answered euer
 That no man schall here halven euer
 But gif he mai in turneyng
 Him out of his fadel bring,
 And maken him lesen hife stiropes bayne.
 [Many afayd, and myght not gayne.

30

That ryche Kyng every zere wolde
 A solempne faste make and holde,
 On hys wyvys mynnyng day,
 That was beryed in an Abbay.
 In a foreste there besyde,
 With grete meyné he wolde ryde,
 Hire dirige do, and masse bothe,
 Poure men fede, and naked clothe ;
 Offring brengre gret plente,
 And fede the couent with gret daynte :
 Towar the Abbai als he com ride,
 And mani knyghtes bi his fide,
 His Doughter also bi him rod,
 Amidde the forest hii abod ;
 Here chaumberleyn zhe clepede hire to,
 And other dammaifeles two,
 And seide, that hii moste alizte,
 To don here nedes and hire rizte.

40

50

Sire Degarre.

3

Thai aligt adoun alle thre,
Tweie damaifeles and fſche ;
And long while ther abiden,
Til al the folk was forht i-riden,
Thai wolden vp, and after wolde,
And couthen nowt here way holde ;
The wode was rough, and thikke, i-wis,
And thai token the wai amys ; 60
Thai moſte fouht, and riden weſt,
In to the thikke of the foreſt,
In to a launde hii ben i-come,
And habbeth wel vndernome.
That thai were amis i-gon,
Thai ligt adoun euerichon,
And cleped and criede al i-fere,
Ac no man arigt hem i-here.
Thai nift what hem was beſt to don,
The weder was hot bifor the non, 70
Hii leien hem doun vpon a grene,
Vnder a chaſtein tre Ich wene ;
And fillen a flepe euerichone,
Bote the damaifele alone.
ghe wente aboute, and gaderede floures,
And herkneſe ſong of wilde foules.
So fer in the launde ghe goht i-wis,
That ghe ne wot neuere whare ghe is ;
To hire maidenſ ghe wolde anon,
Ac hi ne wiſte neuer wat wei to gon. 80
Whenne hi wende beſt to hem terne,
A weiward than hi goth wel gerne ;
Allas ! hi ſeide that I was boren,
Nou Ich wot Ich am forloren :

Sire Degarre.

Wilde bestes me willeth to grinde,
 Er ani man me fchulle finde.
 Than fegh hi fwich a figt,
 Toward hire comen a Knigt ;
 Gentil, gong, and iolif man,
 A robe of scarlet he hadde vpon, 90
 His visage was feir, his bodi ech weies,
 Of countenaunce rigt curteis,
 Wel farende legges, fot, and honde,
 Ther nas non in al the Kynges londe,
 More apert man than was he :
 “ Damaifele, welcome mot thou be,
 Be thou afered of none wihgte,
 I-ich am comen here a Fairi Knygte ;
 Mi kynde is armes for to were,
 On horse to ride, with scheld and spere ; 100
 Forthi aferered be thou nowt,
 I ne haue nowt but mi fwerd i-brout ;
 I-ich haue I loued thé mani a ger,
 And now we beth vs felue her,
 Thou best mi lemman, ar thou go,
 Wether thé liketh wel or wo.”
 Tho no thing ne coude do ghe,
 But wep, and criede, and wolde fle ;
 And he anon gan hire at holde,
 And dide his wille what he wolde, 110
 He binam hire here maidenhod,
 And feththen vp to foren hire stod.
 “ I emman, he feide, gent, and fre,
 Mid schilde I-wot that thou schalt be ;
 Siker ich wot hit worht a knaue,
 Forthi mi fwerd thou fchalt haue ;

Sire Degarre.

5

And whenne that he is of elde,
That he mai him felf bi-welde ;
Tak him the fwerd and bidde him fonde,
To fechen his Fader in eche londe ; 120
The fwerd is god and auenaunt,
Lo, as I faught with a geaunt,
I brak the point in his hed,
And fiththen when that he was ded ;
I tok hit out and haue hit er,
Redi in min aumener ;
zit perauentoure time bith
That mi Sone mete me with,
Be mi fwerd, I mai him kenne :
Haue god dai, I mot gon henne.” 130
The Knigt paffede as he cam ;
Al wepende the fwerd ghe nam,
And com hom fore fikend,
And fond here maidenens al fleepend ;
The fwerd ghe hidde als ghe migte,
And awaked hem in higte,
And doht hem to horfe anon,
And gonne to ride euerichon :
Thanne feghen hi ate laft,
Tweie fquiers come prikend faft, 140
Fram the Kyng thai weren i-fent
To white whider his Doughter went.
Thai browt hire in to the rigte wai,
And comen faire to the Abbay ;
And doth the feruife, in alle thingges,
Mani maffe and riche offringes ;
And whanne the feruife was al i-done,
And i-paffed ouer the none,

Sire Degarre.

The Kyng to his castel gam ride,
 His Doughter rod bi his fide, 150
 And he gemeth his kyngdom ouer al,
 Stoutliche as a god king fischall.

Ac whan ech man was glad and blithe,
 His Doughter fiked an forewed fwithe.
 Here wombe greted more and more,
 Ther while ghe migte ge hidde here fore.

On a dai as hi wepende fet,
 On of hire maidenenes hit vnderzet,
 " Ma Dame, ghe feide, per charite,
 Whi wepe ge now ? telleth hit me." 160

" A gentil maiden, kinde i-loren,
 Help me other Ich am forloren ;
 Ich haue euer gete ben meke, and milde,
 Lo now Ich am with quike schilde :
 gif ani man hit vnderzete,
 Men wolde fai bi fti and ftrete,
 That mi Fader the King hit wan,
 And I ne was neuere aqueint with man.
 And gif he hit him selue wite
 Swich forewe schal to him fmite, 170
 That neuer blize schal he be,
 For al his ioie is in me."
 And tolde here al to geder ther,
 Hou hit was bigete, and wher."

" Ma Dame, quad the Maid, ne care thou nowt,
 Stille a wai hit fischal be browt,
 No man fischall wite in Godes riche,
 Whar hit bicometh but thou and Iche."

Her time come, ghe was vnbounde,
 And deliured al mid founde ; 180

Sire Degarre.

7

A knaue schild there was i-bore,
Glad was the Moder tharfore :
The Maiden feruede here at wille,
Wond that child in clothes stille
And laid hit in a cradel anon ;
And was al prest thar with to gon,
ghit is Moder was him hold ;
Four pound ghe tok of gold,
And ten of seluer also,
Vnder his fote ghe laid hit tho, 190
For fwiche thing hit mihoue
And feththen ghe tok a paire gloue,
That here lemman here sent of Fairi lond,
That nolde on no manne hond,
Ne on child, ne on womman ghe nolde,
But on hire felue wel ghe wolde :
The glouen ge put vnder his hade,
And fiththen a letter ghe wrot and made
And knit hit with a felkene thred
Aboute his nekke, wel god sped ; 200
That who hit founde ffolde i-wite :
Than was in the lettre thous i-write :
“ Par charite, gif ani god man,
This helples child finde can ;
Lat Cristen hit with prestes honde,
And bringgen hit to liue in londe :
For hit is comen of gentil blod.
Helpeth hit with his owen god,
With trefor that vnder his fet lis.
And ten ger eld when that he his 210
Taketh him this ilke glouen two,
And biddeth him, whar euere he go,

Sire Degarre.

That he ne wiue no womman in londe
 But this gloues willen on hire honde,
 For fiker on honde nelle thai nere,
 But on his Moder that him bere."

The Maiden toke the Chil[d] here mide
 Stille awai in auen tide,

Alle the winteres longe nigt,
 The weder was cler, the mone ligt ; 220
 Than warheth ghe war anon.

Of an hermitage in a ston :
 An holi man had ther his wonnyng,
 Thider ghe wente on heying,
 An fette the cradel at his dore.

And durfte abide no lengore,
 And passede forth anon rigt :
 Hom ghe com in that other nigt,
 And fond the leuedi al drupin,
 Sore wepinde, and was fori, 230
 And tolde hire al togeder ther
 Hou ghe had iben, and wher.

The Hermite aros erliche tho,
 And his Knaue was uppe also,
 An feide i-fere here matines,
 And feruede God and his Seins ;
 The litil child thai herde crie,
 And clepede after help on hie.

The holi man his dore vndede,
 And fond the cradel in the stede, 240
 He tok vp the clothes anon,
 And biheld the litel grom ;

He tok the letter, and radde wel fone,
 That tolde him what he scholde done.

Sire Degarre.

9

The Heremite held vp bothe his honde,
An thonked God of al his fonde ;
And bar that child in to his chapel,
And for joie he rong his bel :
He dede vp the glouen, and the trefour,
And cristned the child with gret honour ; 250
In the name of the Trinite,
He hit nemnede Degarre :
Degarre nowt elles ne is
But thing that not neuer whar hit is ,
O the thing that is negth forlorn al so,
For thi the schild he nemnede thous tho.

The Heremite that was holi of lif,
Hadde a fostre that was a wif ;
A riche marchaunt of that countre, ✓
Hadde hire i-spoused in to that cite : 260
To hire that schild he fente tho,
Bi his knaue, and the filuer also ;
And bad here take gode hede,
Hit to forster and to fede ;
And gif God Almigti wolde,
Ten 3er his lif holde,
A3en to him i-scholde hit wise,
He hit wolde teche of clergife.

The litil child Degarre,
Was i-brout in to that cite ; 270
The wif and hire louerd i-fere,
Kept hit ase hit ere owen were.
Bi that hit was ten 3er old,
Hit was a fair child, and a bold,
Wel i-noriffcher, god and hende,
Was nor betere in al that ende ;

Sire Degarre.

He wende wel that the gode man
 Had ben his fader, that him wan,
 And the Wif his moder al so,
 And the Hermite his vnkel bo 280
 And whan the ten 3er was i-spent,
 To the hermitage he was sent ;
 And he was glad him to fe,
 He was so feir and so fre.
 He taughte him of clerkes lore
 Other ten wynter other more :
 And he was of twenti 3er ;
 Staleworth he was, of fwich pouer,
 That ther ne wan man in that lond
 That o breid him miȝt a-ftond. 290

Tho the Hermite feth withouten les,
 Man for him felue that he wes :
 Staleworth to don ech werk,
 And of his elde so god a clerk :
 He tok him his florines and his gloues,
 That he had kept to hife bihoues :
 Ac the ten pound of starlings
 Were i-spended in his foftrings :
 He tok him the letter to rede,
 And biheld all the dede : 300
 " O leue h'Em, per charite,
 Was this letter mad for me."
 " Ze, bi oure Lord, vs helpe ffchall,
 Thus hit was, and told him al."
 He knelede adown al so fwithe,
 And thonked the Ermite of his liue ;
 And swor he nolde flinte no ffound,
 Til he his kinrede hadde i-founde.

Sire Degarre.

11

For in the lettre was thous i-write,
That bi the glouen he ffolde i-wite ; 310
Wich were his Moder, and who
ghif that scho liuede tho ;
For on hire honden hii wolde,
And on non other hii nolde.
Half the florines he gaf the Hermite,
And haluendel he tok him mide :
And nam his leue, an wolde go,
“ Nai, feide the Hermite, schaltu no,
To feche thi ken mightou nowe dure,
Withouten hors and god armure.” 320
“ Nai, quod he, bi Heuene kyng,
Ich wil haue first another thing.”
He hew a doun, bothe grete an grim,
To beren in his hond with him,
A god sapling of an ok ;
Whan he thar with gaf a strok,
Ac wer he neuer so strong a man,
Ne so gode armes hadde vpon,
That he ne scholde falle to grounde,
Swich a bourdon to him he founde. 330
Tho thenne God he him bitawt,
And aither fram other wepyng rawt.
Child Degarre wente his wai,
Thourgh the forest al that dai :
No man he ne herd, ne non he se3 ;
Til hit was non i-passed heg.
Thanne he herde a noife kete
In o valai, an dintes grete ;
Blieue thider he gan to te,
What hit ware he wold i-fe. 340

Sire Degarre.

An Herl of the countre, stout and fers,
 With a Knigt and four squiers ;
 Hadde i-honted a der other two,
 And all here houndes weren a-go.
 Than was thar a dragon grim,
 Ful of filth and of venim,
 With wide throte, and teth grete,
 And wynges bitere with to bete :
 As a lyoun he hadde fet,
 And his tail was long an gret : 350
 The fmoke com of his nose a wai,
 Afe fer out of a chimenai.
 The Knyzt and squiers he had to rent,
 Man and hors to dethe chent :
 The dragon the Erl affaile gan,
 And defended him as a man ;
 And stoutliche leid on with his fwerd,
 And strong strokes on hie gerd ;
 Ac alle his dentes ne greued him nowt,
 His hide was hard fo iren wrout : 360
 Therl flei fram tre to tre,
 Fein he wolde fram him be ;
 And the dragon him gan afail.
 The doughti Erl in that batail,
 Of fegh this child Degarre,
 “ Ha ! help, he feide, per charite ! ”
 The dragoun feth the child com,
 He laft the Erl and to him nom,
 Blowinde and gemend al fo,
 Als he him wolde fwolewe tho : 370
 Ac Degarre was ful strong,
 He tok his bat, gret and long,

Sire Degarre.

13

And in the forehefd he him batereth,
That al the forehefd he to spatereth :
He fil adoun anon rigt,
And frapte his tail with gret migt
Vpon Degarres fide,
That vp fo doun he gan to glide :
Ac he flert vp ase a man,
And with his bat leid vp an,
And al to frufft him ech a bon,
That he lai ded, stille as fton.

380

The Erl knelede a doun biliue,
And thonked the child of his liue ;
And maked him with him gon
To his castel rigt anon,
And wel at hese he him made,
And proferd him al that he hade ;
Rentes, trefor, an eke lond,
For to holden in his hond.
Thanne anfwerede Degarre,
“ Lat come ferst bifor me
Thi leuedi and othir wimmen bold,
Maidenes and wideues, gonge and olde,
And other damoiseles fwete ;
gif mine glouen beth to hem mete
For to done vp on here honde,
Thanne Ich wil take thi londe.
And gif thai ben nowt fo,
I-ich wille take mi leue and go.”

390

400

Alle wimman were forht i-browt,
Wide cuntreis, and forht i-fowt ;
Ech the glouen affaie bigan,
Ac non ne migte don hem on.

Sire Degarre.

He tok his glouen, and vp hem dede,
 And nam his leue in that stede.
 The Erl was gentil man of blod,
 And gaf him a stede ful god,
 And noble armure, riche and fin,
 When he wolde armen him ther in ; 410
 And a palefrai to riden an,
 And a knaue to ben his man :
 And gaf him a fwerd brigte,
 And dubbed him ther to knyght ;
 And fwor bi God Almyti,
 That he was better worthi
 To vsen hors, and armes al so,
 Than with his bat aboute to go.
 Sire Degarre was wel blithe,
 And thanked the Erl mani a fithe ; 420
 And lepe vp on palefrai hiis,
 And doth him forth in his wai.
 Vpon his stede rigte his man,
 And ledde his armes als he wel can.
 Mani a jorne thai ride and fette,
 So on a dai gret folke thei mette,
 Erles and barouns of renoun,
 That come fram a cite toun.
 He asked a ferjaunt what tiding ?
 And whennes hii come, and what is this thing ? 430
 “ Sire, he feide, verrament,
 We come fram-ward a parlement ;
 The King a gret counfeil made,
 For nedes that he to don hade ;
 Whan the parlement was plener,
 He lette crie, fer and ner,

Sire Degarre.

15

gif ani man were of armes so bold,
That with the King juſt i-wold,
He ſſcholde haue in mariage
His dowter, and his heritage, 440
That is kingdom god and fair,
For he ne had non other hair :
Ac no man ne dar graunte ther to,
For mani hit affaieth, and mai nowt do,
Mani erl, and mani baroun,
Knigtes, and ſquiers of renoun ;
Ac ech man that him juſteth with tit,
Hath of him a foul deſpit ;
Some he brekketh the nekke anon,
And of ſome the rig-bon : 450
Some thourgh the bodi he girt,
Ech is maimed, other i-hirt ;
Ac no man mai don him no thing,
Swich wonder chaunce hath the King.”

Sire Degarre thous thenche gan,
“ Ich am a ſtaleworht man :
And of min owen Ich haue a ſtede,
Swerd, and ſpere, and riche wede ;
And gif Ich felle the Kyng adoun,
Euere Ich haue wonnen renoun. 460
And thei that he me herte fore,
No man wot wer Ich was bore ;
Whether deth other lif me bitide,
Agen the King Ich wille ride.”

In the cite his in he taketh,
And reſteth him, and meri maketh.
On a dai with the King he mette,
And knelede adoun, and him grette :

Sire Degarre.

" Sire king, he faide, of muchel migt,
 Mi louerd me fende hider nou rízt, 470
 For to warne zou that he,
 Bi thi leue, wolde juſte with thé,
 And winne thi Dowter gif he mai,
 As the cri was this ender-dai,
 Juſtes he had to the i-nome. "

" De par deus, quath the King, he is welcome :
 Be he baroun, be he erl,
 Be he burgeis, be he cherl ;
 No man wil I forſake,
 He that winneth, al ſſchal take. " 480

A morewe the juſtes was i-ſet,
 The King him purueid wel the bet ;
 And Degarre ne knew no man,
 Ac al his truſt is God upon.
 Erliche to churche than wente he,
 The maſſe he herde of the Trinite ;
 To the Fader he offreth hon florine,
 And to the Sone an other al ſo fine,
 And to the Holi Goſt the thridde :
 The Preſt for him ful ȝerne gan bidde. 490
 And to the ſeruife was i-don,
 To his in he wente wel fon ;
 And let him armi wel afin,
 In god armes to juſti in ;
 His gode ſtede he gan biſtride,
 His ſquier bar his ſſchaft biſide :
 In the feld the King he abide gan,
 As he com ridend, with mani a man,
 Stoutliche out of the cite toun,
 With mani a lord of great renoun ; 500

Sire Degarre.

17

Ac al that in the felde beth,
That the justes i-feth
Seide that hi neuer 3it i-fege
Sa pert a man with here egge,
As was this gentil Degarre ;
Ac no man wiste whennes was he.

Bothe thai gonne to justi than,
Ac Degarre can nowt ther on ;
The King hath the gretter schaft,
And kan inowgh of the craft,
To breke his nekke he had i-ment ;
In the helm he fet his dent,
That the schaft al to sprong.

510

Ac Degarre was so strong,
That in the fadel stille he fet,
And in the stiropes held his fet ;
For sothe I feie, withoute lesing,
He ne couthe na more of justing.
“ Allas ! quath the King, allas !

Me ne fil neuere swich a cas,
That man that Ich migte hitte,
After mi strok migte fitte.”

520

He taketh a wel gretter tre,
And fwor “ So he mošte i-the,
3if his nekke nel nowt a-two,
His rigg schal, ar Ich hennes go.”
He rod eft with gret raundoun,
And thought to beren him a-doun ;
And girt Degarre anon
Right agein the brest bon ;
The schaft was stef and wonder god,
And Degarre stede astod :

530

Sire Degarre.

And al biforen he ros on heghz,
 And tho was he i-fallen negh3;
 But as God Almigti wold,
 The fchaft brak, and migt nowt hold;
 And Degarre his cours out ritte,
 And was agramed out of his witte.
 "Allas! quath he, for vilaynie,
 The King me hath i-smitten thrie, 540
 And I ne touchede him nowt zete,
 Nou I schal vife me bette."
 He turned his stede, with herte grim,
 And rod to the King, and he to him,
 And togider thai gert ful rist,
 And in the scheldes here strokes pist;
 That the speres al to riue3,
 And vprist to here honde fliue3;
 That alle the lordings that ther ben,
 That the justing migte fen, 550
 Seiden hi ne seze neuer with egze,
 Man that mighte so longe dreghze,
 In wraththe for no thing,
 Sitten a strok of here King;
 Ac he his doughti for the nones,
 A strong man of bodi and bones.
 The King with egre mod gan speke,
 "Do bring me a fchaft that wil nowt breke;
 A be mi trewth he schal a-doun,
 Thai he be strengere than Sampson. 560
 And thei he be the bare qued,
 He schal a-doune maugre his heued."
 He tok a fchaft was gret and long,
 The Schild another al so strong;

Sire Degarre.

19

And to the King wel euene he rit,
The King faileth, and he him fmit ;
His fchaft was ftrong, and god with al,
And wel fcharped the coronal ;
He smot the King in the lamer,
He migt flit nother fer ne ner. 570

The King was ftrong, and harde fat,
The ftede ros vp biforn with that ;
And Sire Degarre fo thrifte him than,
That maugre who fo grochche bigan :
Out of the fadel he him caft,
Tail ouer top rigt ate laft.

Than was ther long houting and cri,
The King was for affchamed for thi.
The Lordinges comen with migt and mein,
And broughte the King a horfe agein, 580
An feide with o criing i-wis,
“ Child Degarre hath wonne the pris.”

Than was the Damaifele fori ;
For hi wift wel for whi
That hi fcholde i-fpoufed ben
To a Knigt that fche neuer had fen ;
And lede here lif with fwich a man,
That fche ne wot who him wan,
No in what londe he was i-bore ;
Carful was the Leuedi therfore. 590

Then feide the King to Degarre,
“ Min hende Sone, come hider to me,
And thou were alfo gentil a man
As thou femeft with figt vpan ;
And afe wel coutheft wifdomes do,
As thou art staleworht man thé to ;

Sire Degarre.

Me thowte mi kingdoms wel bifet,
 Ac be thou werfe, be thou bet ;
 Couenaunt Ich wille thé holde,
 Lo her biforn mi Barons bolde ; 600
 Mi Douwter i-take thé be the hond,
 And feife thé her in al mi lond ;
 King thou fchalt ben after me,
 God graunte thé godman to be."
 Than was the Child glad and blithe,
 And thonked the Kyng mani a fithe.
 Gret purueaunce than was ther i-wrout,
 To churche thai were togidere i-brout ;
 And fpoufed that Leuedi verrament,
 Vnder Holi Sacrament. 610

Lo, what chaunfe and wonder ftrong,
 Bitideth mani a man with wrong ;
 That cometh in to an uncouth thede,
 And fpoufeth wif for ani mede,
 And knowes no thing of hire kin,
 Ne fche of his, neither more ne min ;
 And beth i-wedded to gider to libbe,
 Par auenture and beth negth fibbe.
 So dede Sire Degarre the bold,
 Spoufed there is Moder, [to hold] ; 620
 And that hende Leuedi alfo,
 Here owene Sone was fpoufed to,
 That fche vpon her bodi bar ;
 Lo, what auenture fil hem thar ;
 But God, that alle thinge mai ftere,
 Wolde nowt that thai finned i-fere.
 To chirche thai wente with barouns bolde,
 A riche fefte thai gonne to holde ;

Sire Degarre.

21

And wan was wel i-passed non,
And the dai was al i-don. 630
To bedde thai scholde wende, that fre
The Dammaifele and Sire Degarre.
He stod stille, and bithouwte him than,
How the Hermite, the holi man,
Bad he scholde no womman take,
For faired, ne for riches sake ;
But zhe migt this gloues two,
Ligtliche on hire hondes do.
“ Allas ! allas ! than faide he,
What meschaunce is comen to me ; 640
A wai witles wrechche Ich am !
Ich hadde leuere than this kingdam,
That is i-seised in to min hond,
That Ich ware faire out of this lond.
He wrang his hondes, and was fori,
Ac no man wiste therfore wi.
The King parceyued, and faide tho,
“ Sire Degarre wi farest thou so ;
Is ther ani thing don ille,
Spoken or seid agein thi wille ?” 650
“ 3a, Sire, he faide, bi Heuene King,
I chal neuer, for no spoufing ;”
Ther whiles I liue with wimman dele,
Widue, ne wif, ne dammeifele,
But zhe this gloues mai take and fonde,
And ligtlich drawen vp on hire honde.”
His zonge bride that gan here,
And al for thout chaunged hire chere ;
And ate laft gan to turne here mod,
Here visage wex ase red ase blod : 660

Sire Degarre.

Sche knew tho gloues that wer hire.
 " Schewe them hider leue Sire."
 Sche tok the gloues in that stede,
 And liztliche on hire hondes dede ;
 And fil a-down with reuli cri,
 And feide, " God merci, Merci !
 Thou art mi Sone haft spoused me her,
 And Ich am Sone thi Moder der ;
 Ich hadde thé loren, Ich haue thé founde,
 Bleffed be Ihesu Crist that stounde !"

670

Sire Degarre tok his Moder tho,
 And helde here in his armes two ;
 Keste and clepte here mani a fithe,
 That hit was fche, he was ful blithe.
 The Kyng gret wonder hadde,
 What that noife that thai made ;
 And meruaile of hire crying,
 And feide, Doughter, what is this thing ?"
 " Fader, zhe feide, thou schalt i-here,
 Thou weneft that Ich a maiden were ;
 Ac certes nay, Sire, Ich am non,
 Twenti winter non hit is gon,
 That mi maidenhed I les
 In a fforest, as I wes ;
 And this is mi Sone, God hit wot,
 Bi this gloues wel Ich wot."
 Sche told him al that sothe ther,
 Hou the child was geten, and wher ;
 And hou that he was boren al so,
 To the hermitage zhe sente him tho ;
 And feththen herd of him no thing ;
 But thanked be Ihesu, Heuene King,

680

690

Sire Degarre.

23

I-ich haue i-founde him o-liue,
I-ich am his Moder, and ek his Wiue."

" Leue Moder, feide Sire Degarre,
Telle me the sothe par charite,
In to what londe I mai torne,
To seke mi Fader swithe and zerne."
" Sone, zhe faide, bi Heuene King,
I can thé of him telle no thing ;
But tho that he fram me rauzt
His owen swerd he me bitauzt,
And bad Ich scholde take hit thé for than,
zif thou liuedest, and were a man."

700

The swerd sche fet forht anon rízt,
And Degarre hit out plízt ;
Brod and long, and heui hit wes,
In that kyngdom no swich nes.
Then feide Degarre, for than,
" Who so hit auzt he was a man ;
Now Ich haue that I kepe,
Nízt ne dei nel Ich flepe,
Til that I mi Fader se,
zif God wile that hit so be."

710

In the cité he restte al nízt,
A morewe whan hit was dai lit,
He aros and herde his maffe,
He dízte him and forth gan passe.
Of al that cité, than most non
Neither with him riden ne gon ;
But his knaue, to take hede
To his armour, and his stede :
Forth he rod in his wai,
Mani a pas, and mani journai ;

720

Sire Degarre.

So longe he passede in to West,
 That he cam in to th'eld Forest,
 Ther he was bigeten some while ;
 Ther inne he rideth mani a mile ;
 Mani a dai he ride gan,
 No quick best he fond of man ; 730
 Ac mani wilde bestes he segh3,
 And foules fingen on hegh3,
 So longe he drouwth to the nigt,
 The fonne was a doune rigt ;
 Toward toun he wold ride,
 But he nift neuer bi wiche fide.
 Thenne he feth a water cler,
 And amidde a riuier
 A fair Castel of lim and ston,
 Other wonyng was ther non : 740
 To his Knaue he feide, " Tide wat tide,"
 O fote forther nel I ride ;
 Ac here abide wille we,
 And aske herberewe par charite,
 gif ani quik man be here on liue."
 To the water thai come als fwithe ;
 The bregge was a doun tho,
 And the gate open al fo ;
 And in to the castel he gan spede,
 Firft he stabled vp his stede : 750
 He taiede vp his palefrai,
 Inowgh he fond of hote and hai :
 He bad his Grom on heying,
 Kepen wel al here thing.
 He passed vp in to the halle,
 Biheld aboute, and gan to calle ;

Sire Degarre.

25

Ac neither on lond ne on heȝ,
No quik man he ne feȝ.
Amidde the halle flore
A fir was, bet stark an flore ; 760
“ Par fai, (he faide,) Ich am al fure,
He that bette that fure
Wil comen hom ȝit to niȝt,
Abiden Ich wille a litel wigt.”
He sat adoun vpon the dais,
And warmed him wel eche wais ;
And he biheld, and under nam,
Hou in at the dore cam
Four dammaifeles, gent and fre ;
Ech was i-takked to the kne, 770
The two bowen and arewen bere ;
The other two i-charged were
With venefoun, riche and god.
And Degarre vpstod,
And gret hem wel fair apligt ;
Ac thai anwerede no wigt ;
But gede in to chaumbre anon,
And barred the dore after fon.
Sone ther after, with alle,
Ther com a dwerw in to the halle, 780
Four fet of lengthe was in him,
His viſage was ſtout and grim ;
Bothe his berd and his fax
Was criſp an ȝhalew as wax ;
Grete fiſcholdres and quarre,
Riȝt ſtoutliche loked he ;
Mochele were hiſe fet and honde,
Aſe the meſte man of the londe.

Sire Degarre.

He was i-clothed wel arigt,
 His ffishon i-couped as a knigt; 790
 He hadde on a forcot ouert,
 I-forred with blaundeuer apert.
 Sire Degarre him biheld, and lowgz,
 And gret him fair inowgz.
 Ac he ne answered neure a word,
 But fette trestles, and laid the bord;
 And torches in the halle he ligte,
 And redi to the foper digte.
 Than ther com out of the bour,
 A Dammeifele of gret honour, 800
 In the londe non fairer nas,
 In a diapre clothed zhe was;
 With hire come maidenenes tene,
 Some in scarlet, some in grene,
 Gent of bodi, of semblaunt fwete;
 And Degarre hem gan gret.
 Ac hi ne answered no wigt,
 But zede to the foper anon rigt.
 " Certes, (quath Sire Degarre,)
 Ich haue hem gret, and hi nowt me; 810
 But thai be domb, bi and bi,
 Thai schul speke first ar I."
 The Leuedi, that was of rode so brigte,
 Amidde zhe sat anon rigt,
 And on aither half maidenenes fwe;
 The Dwerw hem seruede al so bliue,
 With riche metes, and wel i-digt;
 The coppe he filleth with alle his migt.
 Sire Degarre, couthe of curteisie,
 He fet a chaier bifore the Leuedi, 820

Sire Degarre.

27

And ther in him felue fet,
And tok a knif, and carf his met.
At the foper litel at he,
But biheld the Leuedi fre ;
And fez afe feir a wimman,
Als he heuere loket an,
That all his herte and his thout,
Hire to loue was i-browt.
And tho thai hadde fouped anow3,
The drew [Dwerff] com, and the cloth he drouth : 830
The Leuedis weffche euerichon,
And gede to chaumbre quik anon.¹
In to the chaumbre he com ful sone ;
The Leuedi on here bed fet,
And a maide at here fet,
And harpede notes gode and fine ;
Another brou3te spices and wine.
Vpon the [bedde] he fet adoun,
To here of the harpe foun ;
For murthe of notes fo fchille 840
He fel adoun on flepe stille.
So he flep al that nigt,
The Leuedi wreig him warm apligt,
And a pilewer vnder his heued dede,
And gede to bedde in that ftede.
A morewe, whan hit was dai list,
Sche was vppe, and redi digt.
Faire fche awaked him tho,
“ Aris,” fche feide, “ graith thé, an go :”
And faide thus, in here game, 850
“ Thou art worth to fuffri fchame,

¹ Some lines in this place are evidently omitted in the MS. See page 44.

Sire Degarre.

That al nigt as a best sleptest,
And non of mine maidenens ne keptest."

" O, gentil Leuedi, (seide Degarre,)

For Godes loue, forgif hit me ;

Certes, the murie harpe hit made,

Elles misdo nowt ne hade :

Ac tel me, Leuedi, so hende,

Ar Ich out of thi chaumber wende,

Who is Louerd of this lond ?

860

And who this Castel hath in hond ?

Wether thou be widue, or wif,

Or maiden git of clene lif ?

And whi her be so fele wimman,

Allone withouten ani man ?"—

The Dameifele fore figte,

And bigan to wepen anon rigte :

" Sire, wel fain Ich telle thé wolde,

gif euere the better be me scholde ;

Mi fader was a riche Baroun,

870

And hadde mani a tour and toun,

He ne hadde no child but me,

Ich was his air of this cuntre.

In mene Ich hadde mani a Knigt,

And Squiers that were gode and ligt,

An staleworht men of mester,

To serue in court fer and ner :

Ac thanne is thar here bifide,

A sterne Knigt, i-knawe ful wide,

Ich wene in Bretaine ther be non

880

So strong a man, so he is on ;

He had i-loue me ful gore,

Ac in herte neuere more ;

Sire Begarre.

29

Ne migte Ich louie him agein,
But whenne he seghze ther was no gein :
He was aboute with maiftri,
For to rauiffe me awai ;
Mine Knigtes wolde defende me,
And ofte fowgten hi and he :
The best he flowgh the firste dai, 890
And fethen an othe[r], par ma fai,
And fethen the thridde, and the ferthe,
The beste that migte gon on erthe.
Mine squiers, that weren so stoute,
Bi foure, bi fiue, thai riden oute
On hors, armed wel anowgh,
His houen bodi he hem slough.
Mine men of mefter he slough alle,
And other pages of mine halle ;
Therefore Ich am fore agast, 900
Left he wynne me ate last.”
With this word sche fil to grounde,
And lai a swone a wel gret stounde ;
Hire maidenenes to hire come,
And in hire armes vp hire nome.
He beheld the Leuedi with gret pite,
“ Loueli ma Dame, (quath he,)
On of thine Ich am here,
Ich wille thé help be mi pouere.”
“ ghe Sire, (ghe said,) than all mi lond 910
Ich wil thé giue in to thine hond,
And at thi wille bodi mine,
zif thou migt wreke me of hine.”
Tho was he glad al for to figte,
A wel gladere that he migte

Sire Degarre.

Haue the Leuedi fo brigt,
 gif he flouth that other Knigt.

And als thai stod and spak i-fere,
 A maiden cried, with reuful chere—
 “ Her comez oure enemi faste vs ate, 920
 Drauwe the bregge, and fchet the gate,
 Or he wil fleu ous euerichone.”

Sire Degarre flirt vp anon,
 And at a window him fegh,
 Wel i-armed on hors hegh,
 A fairer bodi than he was on,
 In armes ne fegh he neuer non.
 Sire Degarre armed him blue,
 And on a stede gan out driue,
 With a spere gret of gayn, 930
 To the Knigt he rit agein.

The Knigte spere al to sprong ;
 Ac Degarre was fo strong,
 And so harde to him thrafft ;
 But the Knigt sat so fast,
 That the stede rigge to brek,
 And fel to grounde, and he ek :
 But anon stir[t] vp the Knigt,
 And drough out his fwerd brigt.

“ Aligt,” he feid, “ adoun anon, 940
 To figt thou fchalt a-fote gon,
 For thou haft flawe my stede,
 Deth dint schal be thi mede :
 Ac thine stede flé I nille,
 Ac on fote figte Ich wille.”

Than on fote thai toke the figt,
 And hewe togidere with brondes brigt ;

Sire Degarre.

31

The Kniȝt gaf Sire Degarre
Sterne strokes gret plente ;
And he him agen al fo, 950
That helm and ſchelde cleue a two.
The Kniȝt was a greved fore,
That his armour to burſte thore ;
A ſtok he gaf Sire Degarre,
That to grounde fallen is he ;
But he ſtirt vp anon riȝt,
And ſwich a ſtok he gaf the Kniȝt,
Vpon his heued, ſo harde i-fet,
That helm, and heued, and bacinet,
That ate breſt ſtod the dent, 960
Ded he fil doun verrament.

The Leuedi lai in o kernel,
And biheld the batail eueri del ;
ȝhe ne was neuer er ſo blithe,
Sche thankede God fele fithe.
Sire Degarre com in to caſtel,
Agein him com the Dammaifel,
And thonked him ſwithe of that dede ;
In to chaumber ſche gan him lede,
And vnarmed him anon, 970
And fet him hire bed vpon ;
And faide, “ Sire, par charite,
I thé prai dwel with me,
And al mi lond Ich wil thé give,
And mi felue whil that I liue.”
“ Grant merci, Dame, (faide Degarre,)
Of the gode thou bedeſt me ;
Wende Ich wille in to other londe,
More of hauentours for to fonde ;

Sire Degarre.

And be this twelue moneth be go, 980

Agein Ich wil com thé to."

The Leuedi made moche mourning

For the Knigtes departing ;

And gaf him a ftede god and fur,

Gold and filuer, and god armur ;

And bitauzt him Ihefu Heuene King,

And fore thai wepen at here parting.

Forht wente Sire Degarre,

Thurh mani a diuers cuntre ;

Euer mor he rod weft,

990

So in a dale of o forest

He mette with a dougti Knigt,

Vpon a ftede god and lizt,

In armes that were riche and fur,

With the fcheld of afur,

And thre bor heuedes ther in,

Wel i-painted with gold fin.

Sire Degarre anon rizt

Hendeliche grette the Knigt,

And faid, " Sire, God with thé be."

1000

And thous agein anfuerede he ;

" Velaun ! wat doft thou here,

In mi forest to chafe mi dere ?"

Degarre anfwerede, with wordes meke,

" Sire, thine dere nougt me feke :

I-ich am an aunterous Knigt,

For to feche werre, and figt."

The Knigt faid, withouten fail,

" gif thou comest to feke batail,

Here thou haft thi per i-founde,

1010

Arme thé fwithe in this ffounde."

Sire Degarre and his squier
 Armed him in riche atir,
 Wig an helme riche for the nones,
 Was ful of precious stones,
 That the Maide him gaf faun fail,
 For whom he did rather batail;
 A fischeld he keft aboute his fwere,
 That was of armes riche and dere,
 With thre maiden es heuedes of filuer brigt, 1020
 With crounes of gold, precious of figt;
 A fischafft he tok that was nowt smal,
 With a kene coronal;
 His squier tok another spere,
 Bi his Louerd he gan hit bere.
 Lo fwiche auentoure he gan bitide,
 The Sone agein the Fader gan ride,
 And noither knew ne other no wigt:
 Now beginnez the firste figt.
 Sire Degarre tok his cours thare, 1030
 Agein his Fader a fischafft he bare,
 To bere him doun he hadde i-mint,
 Rigt in the fcheld he fet his dint;
 The fischafft brak to peces al,
 And in the fischeld fat the coronal.
 An other cours thai gonne take,
 The Fader tok, for the Sones sake,
 A fischafft that was gret and long,
 And he an other also strong;
 Togidder thai riden wig gret raundoun, 1040
 And aither bar other a-doun,
 With dintes that thai fmiten there,
 Here stede rigges to bursten were;

Sire Degarre.

A fote thai gonne figt i-fere,
 And laiden on with fwerdes clere.
 The Fader amerueiled wes
 Whi his fwerd was point les,
 And feide to his Sone apligt,
 "Herkne to me a litel wigt :
 Wher were thou boren, in what lond ?" 1050
 "In Litel Bretagne, Ich vnderftond,
 Kingges doughter Sone, witouten les,
 Ac I not who mi Fader wes."
 "What is thi name?" than faide he.
 "Certes, men clepez me Degarre."
 "O Degarre, fone mine,
 Certes Ich am Fader thine ;
 And bi thi fwerd I knowe hit here,
 The point is in min aumenere."
 He tok the point, and fet ther to. 1060
 Degarre fel i-fwone tho,
 And his Fader fikerli
 Also began fwonni.
 And whanne of fwone arifen were,
 The Sone crid, Merci there
 His owen Fader of his mifdede ;
 And he him to his caftel gan lede,
 And bad him dwelle wif him ai.
 "Certes, Sire, (he faide,) nai ;
 Ac gif hit your wille were, 1070
 To mi Moder we wende i-fere,
 For fche is in gret mourning."
 "Blethelich, (quath he,) bi Heuene King."

[The Conclusion of
Syr Degore
from the Black Letter Edition.]

Syr Degoré, and his Father dere,
Into Englande they rode in fere ;
They were both armed, and wel dighte,
As it behoueth euerye knyght.
They rode forth on theyr journey,
Many a myle of that contrey,
And on theyr way they rode full fast, 1080
Into England they came at the lafte.
When they myght England fe,
They drewe thyther as they wold be ;
When they were to the palayes come,
They were welcome, all and some,
And they behelde ouer all ;
The Ladye them spyed ouer a wall.
And when the Ladye saw that fyght,
She went to them with all her myght,
And ryght well she them knewe, 1090
And then she chaunged all her hewe,
And sayd, “ My dere sonne Degoré,
Thou hast thy Father brought with thee.”
“ Trewly, Madame, (then sayd he,)
Full well I wote it is he.”
“ Nowe, thanked be God then, (sayd the Kynge,)
For nowe I knowe, without leafynge,

Sire Degarre.

Who is Degores Father in dede."
 The Lady fowned in that ftede,
 And soone after fykerlye 1100
 The Knyght wedded that Lady.
 She and her Sonne was departed atwin,
 For he and she were to nye kynne.
 Forthe then went Syr Degoré,
 With the Kynge, and his menye,
 His Father and his Mother dere,
 Vnto the castell they went in fere,
 Where as dwelled that Lady bright,
 That he had wonne in right,
 And wedded her with great solempnite, 1110
 Before all the Lordes of that countre.
 Thus came the Knyght out of his care :
 God geue us grace wel to fare,
 And that we, vpon Domes day,
 Come to the blyffe that lasteth aye !

Thus endeth the Tretyse of Syr Degore.

Appendix.



VARIOUS READINGS IN SYR DEGARRE

FROM THE

CAMBRIDGE MANUSCRIPT.

(*MS. Cantab. Ff. ii. 38, formerly marked 690.*)

(*Line 1, as well as the two lines inclosed in brackets, after the title, are supplied from the Cambridge MS.—The first lines are as follows:—*

Knyztes that were some tyme in lande 1
 Far they wolde them selfe fande.
 To seke aventurs nychte and day
 How that they mygt their strenkyth assay ;
 So dud a Knyght Sir Degare,
 I schall yow telle what man was he.
 In Bretayne the Lasse, ther was a Kyng
 Of grete power in alle thynges,
 Styffeste in armour undur schylde,
 And moost doghtyest to fygt in fylde. 10

The Kynge had chyldyr noon, 17
 Sone nor doghtur but oon.

(*Lines 19 and 20 not in the Cambridge MS.*)

But he myghte in justynge. 31

(*Lines 34 to 40 in the text are supplied from the Cambridge MS. to fill up the blank in the Auchinleck MS.: but "asayd," in line 34, should have been printed "assayed;" and "faste," in line 36, "feste."*)

To do dyryges and masses bothe, 41
 Pore to fede and naked to clothe.

So on a day the Kyng gede to that Abbey, 45
 And many gede wyth hym that day.
 And hys own doghtur be hys syde ;
 In the myddys of the foreste sche bad abyde :

Adowne they lyght alle thoo, 53
 The Damysels and schoo.

They myste sowthe, and went weste, 61
 Into the thyck of the foreste ;

Into a launde they are comen,
And have ryghte welle undernomen
That they have mysgone.

Sche goth abowte and gedurth flowres, 75
And heryth songe of the fowles ;
So farre into the wode sche yede y-mys,
That sche wyste not where sche was Y wys.

When sche went to them to renne, 81
Aweywarde sche wente then,
And callyd and cryed evyr more,
And wepyd and wrynged hur handys sore :
And seyde, " Allas that Y was borne !
For now Y wot Y am forlorne,
Wylde bestys me wylle to-grynde,
Or any man may me finde."

Gentyll, sche thought, and a yoly man. 89
" Lemman, (he seyde,) welcome to me, 96
Of me be thou ferde no whyghte,
I am comyn here a knyghte.
My kynde ys armes for to bere.

And now we be togedur here, 104
Thou schalt be my lemman or thou go
Whedur thou thynke wele or woo."
No more then cowde do sche,
But wepyd and cryed, and wolde fle.
Anon in hys armys he can hur folde,
And dud hys wylle what he wolde, 110
And toke away hur maydyn-hodd,

And sythen before hur up he stode,
And seyde, " Lemman, feyre and free,
Wyth chylde Y wot thou schalt bee ;
Well Y wote hyt schalle be a sonne,
Therefore my swyrde thou schalt nome."

(Lines 117 to 120 not in the Cambridge MS.)

I toke hyt owt, and haue hyt here, 125
Lo ! hyt ys here in my pawtenere.

Have gode day, my swete lemman." 130

And wakynd hur maydyns anon ryght, 136
And lepe up on ther horsys everychone,
And began to ryde, and forthe they gone.

To wete whodur hys Doghtur was went. 142

And hys own Doghtur be hys syde, 150
And kept hys kingdome ovyr alle.

So on a day sche sore can wepe, 157
And oon of hur maydyns hyt under-gete.

" O gentylle maydyn, for charyte, 161
I thé beseche, now helpe me.

That walkythe be way or strete. 166

And yf my fadur the Kyng hyt wyte, 169
Soche sorowe to hys herte wylle smyte,
That glad wyll he nevyr bee.

"Gode Madame (sche sayde) care thé noghte,	175	And stale away in a mornynge : Sche passyd ovyr a wyld hethe, Thorow felde and wode forthe sche goyth, Alle the longe wynter nyghte, The wedur was clear, the mone schone bryght.	
Stylle away hyt schalle be broghte, Ther schalle no man wyt where yt ys, But thou and Y, so have Y blyss."			
A feyre sonne there was borne.	181	Sche turned ageyne anon ryghte,	227
And can hyt lappe in clothys stylle.	184	And come home in anodur nyghte : Sche fonde the Lady all drupy, Sore wepyng and swythe sory.	
gyt hys Modur can hym beholde.	187		
For moche thyng hym behoves.	191	The Armyte arose tho,	233
Sythen sche toke a pere of gloves, That were sende hur owt of Elves lande, But they wolde on no womans hande. On chylde nor on woman the gloues nolde, But on hur hande well they wolde.		And hys Chylde also, And seyde togedur ther Matens, And servyd God and All Seyntys.	
The gloves sche put undur hys hede.	197	He called the chylde Degaré.	252
And helpe hyt for to leue in lande.	206	For Degaré no nother thyng ys But thyng that wotyth not where hyt ys, Or thyng that ys loste also, Therefore the Chylde he callyd soo.	
The tresure that undur hys hed lyes.	209	<i>(Lines 259 and 260 not in the Cambridge MS.)</i>	
That he love no woman in lande,	213	And the Ermyte hys Eme too.	280
But yf the gloves wyll on hur hande.		When the ten yere were spent, To the Ermyte he was sent ; The Ermyte was glad hym to see, He was so perte, feyre, and free : He taghte hym of Clerkys lore, Other ten yere and more.	
<i>(Instead of lines 217 to 220 the Cambridge MS. has the following :—)</i>			
When sche had so done, The Maydyn toke the Chylde welle soon : Sche toke the cradull and alle thyng,		He toke hym hys tresure, and hys gloffe,	298
		That he had loken to hys behoffe.	

- " Leve Eme (he seyde), for charyté, 301
 Was thys lettur wretyn for me ?"
- The chylde knelyd downe belyve, 305
 And thankyd the Ermyte ofte sythe.
- Yf he evyr myghte come hur to ; 312
 For on hur hondes the gloves wolde,
 On no nodur womans they nolde.
 Halfe the florens he gaf the Ermyte,
 And that odor halfe up he dydd.
- That he schulde him dryve to grounde, 329
 With that bronde, in a lyttyll stounde.
 The Ermyte hym God betaghte,
 And eyther for other wepyd, and laghte.
- The[n] harde he noyse grete, 337
 In a valey, and dyntys leke ;
 Thedurward he can hye,
- What hyt were he wolde see ; 340
 A Knyght he saw, stoute and fers,
 Was comyn wyth two squyers,
 And had hunted a dere or two,
 And all hys howndys were fro hym goo.
 Then was ther a Dragon grete and grymme,
 Full of hature and of venym,
 With a wyde throte, and tethe grete,
 With that Knyghte harde can mete :
 As a lyon he had fete,
- His tayle was longe and venym eke : 350
 The smoke owt of hys nose can wende,
 As hyt were a fyre that brende :
- The two Squyers he had to-rende,
 And ther horsys to dethe spende.
 The Knyght well harde he assayle can,
 But he defendyd hym as a man ;
 Stowtly he smote hym with hys swyrde,
 And grete strokys on hym gyrde ;
 Of alle hys dyntes grevyd hym noon,
 He was harder than the ston. 360
 (*Lines 361 to 364 not in the Cambridge MS.*)
- And toke hys staffe, grete and longe, 372
 And on the hed he hym baturd,
 That hys hedd alle to-claturde.
 The Dragon felle downe anon ryghte,
 And flapped hys tayle with moche myghte.
- And with hys staffe he leyde hym on, 380
 And also brake every bonne ;
 That he lay dedd stylye as a ston.
 The Knyght come to hym belyve,
- Home to hys court anon. 385
 Well at ese hym he made,
 And profurd hym halfe that he had.
- Then answeyrd Syr Degaré, 391
 " Let feche forthe before me
 The ladys, and odor maydyns bolde,
 Wyvys, wydows, yonge and olde,
 And odor damysels swete.
- Alle the wyvys were there broghte, 401
 In that cuntré that myght be soghte ;
 Eevry oon the glovys assay can,

(*Lines 413 and 414 not in the Cambridge MS.*)

Then with a staffe on fote to goo. 418
 Degary was ther of fulle blythe,
 And thankyd the Kinge therof full swythe,
 And lepe upon hys hakeney.

And Degaré askyd a Squyer, What is this
 thyng, 429
 Fro whens that they come rydyng?

When the Parlament was all done, 435
 He let crye a justyng soon;
 Yf any man were of armes so bolde
 That with the Kynge juste wolde,
 And he myght for any thyng,

Hym owte of hys sadull bryng, 440
 He schulde have, to hys maryage,
 Hys Doghtur, and also hys herytage.

And some thorow the body he gyrdyth, 451
 Every man he maymeth and hurtyth.

Then Degaré bethynk hym can, 455
 And seyde, "Y am a stalworth man,
 And am now in my yonge blode,
 And have armour wondur gode,
 And also of my owne a stede,
 Y wyll assay how Y may speede!
 Yf Y may bere the Kynge a-doune.

In that Cyte hys ynne he takyth. 465

As thy crye was thys Endurs-day, 474
 To juste with thé he hath me nome."
 "Syr, (seyde the Kynge,) thou art welcome."

No man on lyve wyll Y forsake, 479
 Who so wynnyth, alle let hym take!"

The Preste for hym preyers can bydd, 490
 When the Masse was alle done,
 To hys oostys he cam fulle soon,
 And let arme hym well and fyne
 In gode armoure to juste ynne.

Prekyng owt of the towne 495
 With many lordynges of grete renowne;
 Many a thousande come hym tylle,
 To see the justys, at ther wyll:
 And alle men that there were,
 Swere and seyde, all in fere,
 That nevyr zyt they syen.

To bere hym downe he had mynte, 511
 In hys schylde he sye the dynte.

(*Lines 515 to 518 not in the Cambridge MS.*)

And sware, so ever mote he thé. 524
 Yf hys neck wyll not in two,
 Hys bak schall, or evyr Y goo.

And Degaryes stede nygh downe gode. 532

